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SCHAKOWSKY HAILS PASSAGE OF RYAN WHITE CARE ACT OF 2000

BILL ENSURES CONTINUED FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a leading advocate in Congress for people with HIV/AIDS, today hailed the passage of the Ryan White CARE Act Amendments of 2000 by the House of Representatives. "Today's action to reauthorize the CARE Act for five years at \$1.6 billion a year ensures that the federal government will continue its commitment to funding programs to assist people infected with HIV/AIDS. Congress had to act this year, otherwise medical care and support services provided to people living with HIV under this Act would not be available."

"With only a few days left before we adjourn for the year, I am relieved that Congress took action to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act. In every state, the CARE Act is a lifeline to primary care and social support services to residents infected with HIV/AIDS," Schakowsky said.

"My constituents have told me that, without this Act, they would be unable to afford the treatments needed so that they can remain healthy and productive members of their community. As members of Congress, we have supported increased medical research efforts that have led to promising treatment advances for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Ryan White CARE Act helps to ensure that people can actually obtain that treatment. It helps them find affordable housing and employment opportunities. It is a program that works and deserves our continued support," Schakowsky added.

Nationwide, more than 40,000 people are infected each year and the state of Illinois continues to be highly affected by this epidemic. The Chicago area has the sixth highest number of reported AIDS cases, and Illinois ranks ninth among all states.

"Over the years, we have made great strides against this disease. With the help of local efforts, non-profit organizations and support from the federal government, we have delivered needed services and care and helped improve the quality of life for many Americans living with HIV/AIDS. However, we must do more to vigorously fight this disease here at home and abroad," Schakowsky said.

Earlier this year, Schakowsky led efforts calling for the reauthorization of the CARE Act. She also initiated a letter, which was signed by Democratic and Republican members of the Illinois delegation, to key members of the House Commerce Committee calling for action.